

**Obi Emmanuel Agwam** (B.1999 in Lagos Nigeria), is a painter based in New York City. He started acrylic and oil paintings in 2019 due to a class at his community college. Agwam is an artist that creates portraits that depict ideas of black representation and fantasy. He creates characters that are the culmination of different stories and people. None of the characters are specific, but instead carry a familiarity for the viewer. People see friends, family, and acquaintances through these fantasy characters.

The characters he paints are made with a mix of realism and fantasy. The fantasy draws inspiration from cartoons he has seen, and sometimes, anti black imagery in the past. Body parts are exaggerated and painted with nature around them. The purpose of the exaggeration is to bring forward the themes that being depicted.

Through these characters Agwam deals with emotions, death, and life of black people. The characters' expression and design reaffirm these themes in every painting. The backgrounds of these characters are urban, a callback to his childhood and a source of context for these characters. He uses these characters to depict stories in a way that's digestible for the viewer.

Agwami's artwork also serves as an affirmation for joy. Many of the characters have smiles, smiles that take up a majority of the compositions. These smiles serve one purpose, to make the viewer smile, to remind them of the importance of a smile. He firmly believes that art should be an enjoyable experience, that if he can make people feel joy through his works then his art is worth something.

# CV

regular  
normal

Obi Emmanuel Agwam  
Born 1999 in Lagos Nigeria  
Lives and work Vally Stream, New York

## EDUCATION

2022 BFA, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022 Tears from the Bricks, Independent Art Fair, REGULARNORMAL, New York  
2021 *A Smile for Tomorrow*, New Image Gallery, Los Angeles

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Last Call*, Bradley Erktaskiran, Montreal, Canada  
2021 *House Parte*, Show Curated by Carlye Packer, Palm Springs  
*Outer Waters*, New Image Gallery, Los Angeles  
*SHINING IN THE LOW TIDE*, Uncle Brother, REGULARNORMAL, New York  
*Hereditary*, Swivel Gallery, Brooklyn  
*One After Nineteen*, Independent Art Fair, REGULARNORMAL, New York  
Untitled Miami, New Image Gallery  
2020 *Black In Time*, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York  
2019 The Living Gallery, Brooklyn

## SELECTED PRESS

2020 Seeing Stars with Emmanuel Agwam- Fashion Institute of Technology Blog  
Obi Agwam And Black Stories of paint-Royal State of Mind.